

The Law Office of James M. Branden
80 Bay Street Landing, Suite 7J
Staten Island, NY 10301
Tel. 212-286-0173
Fax 212-286-0495

March 4, 2025

Hon. Dora L. Irizarry
United States District Judge
Eastern District of New York
225 Cadman Plaza East
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Re: United States v. Mohammad Ibrahim Bazzi
Cr. Docket No. 23-41 (DLI)

Dear Judge Irizarry:

I represent Mr. Bazzi who is to be sentenced in the above-referenced matter on March 12, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. For the reasons set forth below, Mr. Bazzi should be sentenced to time served, the equivalent of approximately 24 months, and removed.

Personal History

Mr. Bazzi was born in Lebanon in 1964. His parents both died in 2023, when they were well into their 90s.

Mr. Bazzi's father founded Ibrahim Bazzi and Sons, a company based in Sierra Leone, Africa, that manufactured, processed and distributed various food staples, including sugar, flour and tomato paste. As the name implied, all of Ibrahim's male children worked for the company for some time.

Mr. Bazzi has eight siblings, three of whom have passed. Nabil died in 1990 in Sierra Leone as a result of a helicopter crash, leaving behind a wife and two children. Khalil died in 2001, also in Sierra Leone, as a result of an automobile crash, leaving behind a wife and five children. And, Hassan, who was residing in Australia, died of a heart attack in 2009, also leaving behind a wife and five children.

Of the surviving siblings, the three oldest live in Sydney, Australia. Ali, age 72, is a dentist with a wife and two children.

Hon. Dora L. Irizarry
United States District Judge
March 4, 2025
Page 2

Dallel, age 66, owns a beauty salon. She is married with six children. Miriam, age 64, is a widow and is supported by her three children. Houssein, age 62, lives in Sierra Leone. He owns and manages a hotel and several residential properties. He is married with six children. Last, Abdallah, age 58, lives in Lebanon. He is a plastic surgeon and is married with two children. Obviously, this a very dynamic bunch.

Mr. Bazzi was raised in Lebanon and attended local schools. Upon his graduation from Jamil Jabar High School for Boys, in 1980, his father summoned him to Sierra Leone to work at the family business. Mr. Bazzi learned the business and rose through the ranks quickly. When his brother, Nabil, died, Mr. Bazzi became the chief executive. War broke out in Sierra Leone seven or eight years later and Mr. Bazzi was constrained to leave the country.

Beginning in or around 1998, Mr. Bazzi resided in both Belgium and Lebanon and founded and ran several more business entities. In 1998, he founded Global Trading Group, offering energy solutions to emerging countries, including oil commodities, petroleum storage, export facilities, power stations, infrastructure and construction projects. In 2001, he founded Euro-Africa Group, a petroleum wholesaler based in Gambia. In 2005, he founded GAM Petroleum, a fuel storage depot, and teamed up with Trafigura (Swiss) and Total (French). The company started operation in 2009. In 2012, Mr. Bazzi partnered with the Seaboard Corporation (U.S.) to form Gambia Milling, a wheat and agriculture wholesaler. Though Mr. Bazzi's businesses had uniformly been subject to regular audit procedures, no wrongdoing was ever detected. In 2018, however, due to OFAC's finding that he was a specially designated global terrorist (SDGT), his interests in all of these businesses ceased.

Mr. Bazzi speaks fluently in Arabic, English and a variety of West African dialects.

Mr. Bazzi married Sawsan Hodroj in 1998 and together they have five adult children and one twelve-year old. Beginning in or about 2015, Mr. Bazzi had an affair with Dialli Iskindrani. This relationship resulted in two children, now eight and nine years old, and the demise of his marriage to Ms. Hodroj. Mr. Bazzi and Ms. Iskindrani married but the marriage was fraught from the get-go and they separated quickly and remain so.

Mr. Bazzi remains close to Ms. Hodroj and to all of his

Hon. Dora L. Irizarry
United States District Judge
March 4, 2025
Page 3

children. Upon his release, he intends to reside in Belgium with his son, Wael.

The Offense

In May 2018, Mr. Bazzi was designated by OFAC as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) and as such, under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act and the Global Terrorism Sanctions Regulations, property interests of his in the United States were blocked and could not be transferred, paid, exported, withdrawn or otherwise dealt in (PSR. ¶¶ 14, 19, 20).¹ Following his designation, in 2019, Mr. Bazzi agreed with others to liquidate his interests, dating back to 2007, in the assets of a restaurant chain with a central food preparation facility in Dearborn, Michigan, and to transfer the funds out of the United States. Mr. Bazzi stated at the change of plea proceeding that:

In May 2019, after I was designated as [an SDGT] . . . and knowing such designation, I agree[d] with others to transfer funds [of mine in] the United States to outside the United States. I [knew] that such was prohibited . . . Because of my designation, I was also involved in discussion[s to conceal] the nature of . . . the transfer, so it [would] appear to be legitimate (guilty plea transcript at 41).

Mr. Bazzi's Arrest and Detention

Mr. Bazzi was arrested in Romania in February 2023. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He was later extradited to the United States where he was arraigned and detained at the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) for eighteen months. [REDACTED]

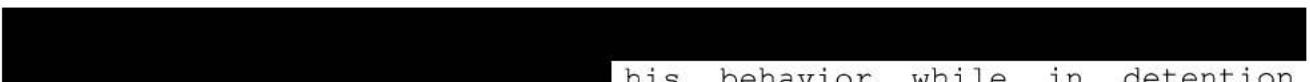
¹

Mr. Bazzi denies the underlying allegations that he financed Hezbollah and through independent counsel has made efforts to reverse, modify or otherwise challenge the SDGT determination, thus far to no avail.

Hon. Dora L. Irizarry
United States District Judge
March 4, 2025
Page 4

A large rectangular area of the page is completely blacked out, indicating that the content has been redacted.

Mr. Bazzi was a model detainee at the MDC – an understaffed, notoriously dangerous facility (see United States v. Gustavo Chavez, 22 Cr. 303 (JMF) (SDNY, Jan. 4, 2024, DE 31) (“[i]t has gotten to the point that it is routine for judges in this District and the Eastern District to give reduced sentences to defendants based on the conditions at the MDC” and because the political branches seem disinclined to remedy the situation, “the only other way to mitigate the ongoing tragedy is to improve the ratio of correctional officers to prisoners by reducing . . . the prisoner population”) – and for the last seven months at the Hudson County Jail (HCJ). At the MDC, Mr. Bazzi was on lockdown for 207 days (roughly 7 months) due to three murders in the facility and dangerous gang-related uprisings. The ambient anxiety must have been overwhelming. Despite this, Mr. Bazzi completed coursework (see attached as **EXHIBIT A**) and made significant efforts to improve the passage of time for others at the facility. In the latter regard, he worked in food service, regularly preparing kosher and halal meals, and special meals for religious holidays. One work performance review I received from prior counsel (see attached as **EXHIBIT B**) indicated: “Inmate Bazzi is an all-round great worker who gets along well with both staff and inmates and has been an asset to the AM kitchen detail.” In addition, he originated and led multi-faith (Christian, Muslim and Jewish), substantive discussions, three times per week to promote the spiritual well-being and mutual respect of all participants. Suffice it to say, Mr. Bazzi had no disciplinary record. While the HCJ may not provide inmate records, it must be assumed that Mr. Bazzi remained infraction-free and continued in his outreach.

A large rectangular area of the page is completely blacked out, indicating that the content has been redacted.

his behavior while in detention represent significant efforts to make amends.

Hon. Dora L. Irizarry
United States District Judge
March 4, 2025
Page 5

Mr. Bazzi's Physical Condition

Further, all the laudable behavior in the prior section occurred while Mr. Bazzi was experiencing various health scares. He has suffered from hypertension and high-cholesterol for more than a decade. These conditions (and perhaps his work ethic) likely brought on the two strokes he suffered in 2014 and 2021. He suffers from back pain due to two damaged discs in his spine. At the moment he also suffers from a hernia and a kidney stone. Medication at the MDC and HCJ has been spotty and not what he was prescribed prior to his arrest. He has had allergic reactions (extreme dermatitis, e.g.) to some of the treatment and stopped taking medicine, at times, because of the inefficacy of it and the painful reactions. He greatly looks forward to the medical care he was receiving at liberty.

Also, following the filing of the PSR Addendum, Mr. Bazzi informed me that he believed he suffered a heart attack on February 9 (the day of the Super Bowl). On that morning, he reported to health services with an inability to take in a full breath and a bitter taste in his mouth. He waited two and one-half hours to be seen. He was told there was no one present to take a blood test to confirm a possible heart attack and the facility could not send him to a hospital. Normal breathing resumed, on its own, approximately one hour later. A new doctor has since been engaged at the HCJ and Mr. Bazzi was seen by him approximately ten days ago. An ultrasound was administered and showed that Mr. Bazzi's heart is leaking blood, which may be the result of the February 9 events. This doctor placed Mr. Bazzi on a regimen of pills to address the leakage (he is also on medication for a kidney stone, high blood pressure and high cholesterol) and has requested hospitalization for further testing, but as of March 1, the last time I saw Mr. Bazzi, he had not been taken to a hospital.

Character Letters

I have enclosed character letters from some of Mr. Bazzi's family, including: children, Wael ("I appeal to this court to see my father as I do: a man hounded by an inalienable sense of duty, imperfect in his choices, but ultimately a force of good in the world"), Noor ("If you ask any stranger about him, all they would say is how much of a good man he is, how generous, thoughtful, caring, loving, positive man, husband, brother, son, father and person he is,") and Rim ("[I] hope you will see in him the caring

Hon. Dora L. Irizarry
United States District Judge
March 4, 2025
Page 6

and selfless man who has touched so many lives"); siblings, Hussein ("Since my brother's departure, the burden of running our family business has fallen on my shoulders alone Without him, we have struggled to meet the demands of our clients, and the decline in business has been noticeable[, revenue has plummeted, we've lost key contracts, and several employees have been forced to leave due to financial instability") Ali ("Throughout his life, [Mr. Bazzi] has consistently prioritized his family and community over personal gain. He has avoided political entanglements, focusing instead on running his business and uplifting others") and Miriam (" . . . he has always been the number one supporter and provider for many members of not only our family but our entire community"); and cousin, Danny (of Mr. Bazzi, "[h]e became known in our village [in Lebanon] for helping those in need, particularly orphans and underprivileged families"); and niece, Shadyah (". . . in Gambia, where he was able to build a petroleum port, bring electricity to over 140 villages, solved energy problems in the city by building two power stations, built water projects and flour mills. He did so much to improve the lives of the natives. He believed in education for girls" (see attached as **EXHIBIT C**).

ARGUMENT

A BELOW-GUIDELINES VARIANCE TO A TERM OF TIME-SERVED IS APPROPRIATE FOR THIS 60 YEAR OLD, SICKLY, FIRST OFFENDER, WHO HAS A REMARKABLE RECORD OF PRIOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND HAS BEEN A MODEL DETAINEE

Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §3553(a) (2), this Court is required to "impose a sentence sufficient, but not greater than necessary" to comply with generally recognized purposes of sentencing, including the need:

- A) to reflect the seriousness of the offense, to promote respect for the law, and to provide just punishment for the offense;
- B) to afford adequate deterrence to criminal conduct;

Hon. Dora L. Irizarry
United States District Judge
March 4, 2025
Page 7

- C) to protect the public from further crimes of the defendant; and
- D) to provide the defendant with needed education or vocational training, medical care, or other correctional treatment in the most effective manner.

Among other things, the sentencing court is also required to consider: the Sentencing Guidelines, the nature and circumstances of the offense and the history and characteristics of the defendant. 18 U.S.C. §§3553(a)(1), (a)(4), (6).

With a total offense level of 21 and a criminal history category of I, Mr. Bazzi is exposed to a Guidelines range of imprisonment of 37 to 46 months, the bottom of said range about one year more than he has served to date.

While Mr. Bazzi believes his SDGT designation was made in error, he knew of it when he tried to move assets out of the United States in 2019, and he has owned up to the criminality.

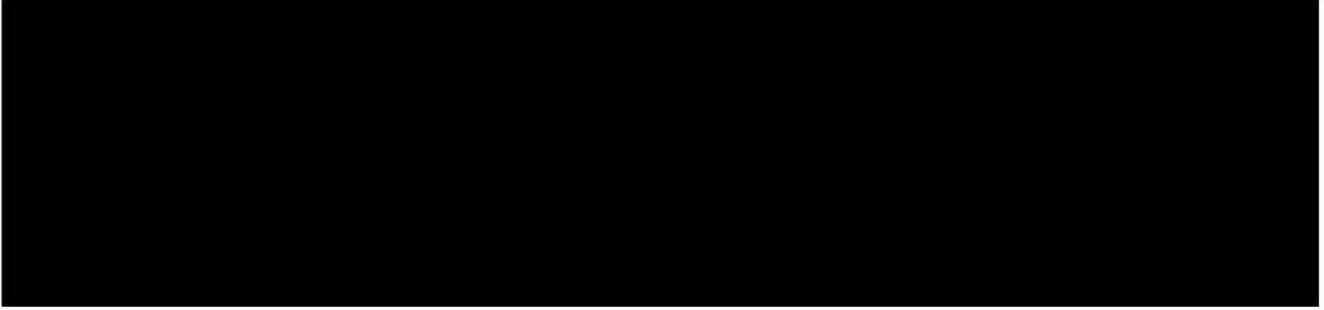
What distinguishes Mr. Bazzi and merits a downward variance are Mr. Bazzi's personal history and characteristics. His work ethic would appear unmatched. He was the founder and CEO (until the SDGT designation in 2018) of 4 businesses serving Africa and Europe and still found time to assist his brothers in the family business. He was a loving son, assisting his parents until their deaths in their 90s. His business ventures have provided sufficient income to raise eight children ranging in present age from 35 to 8 years. He remains close to all of his children and even to his first wife, Ms. Hodroj. The attached character letters from various family members are high testament to his goodness. He speaks many languages fluently, including Arabic, English and various West African dialects. He is a devout Muslim, having also received training in Christianity and Judaism. He has never used drugs or alcohol.

Despite the depraved conditions at the MDC where he spent eighteen months, Mr. Bazzi stayed out of trouble, enrolled and completed all rehabilitative classes available, found work in the kitchen where he was a most valued worker, and led multi-faith religious discussions thrice weekly. I understand he has remained infraction-free at the HCJ, though classes and religious

Hon. Dora L. Irizarry
United States District Judge
March 4, 2025
Page 8

instruction are not possible there. In short, Mr. Bazzi has been a model and altruistic detainee.

It must not be forgotten that Mr. Bazzi contributed to the prison community despite grave medical conditions and a lack of effective treatment. Indeed, his most recent episode, an apparent heart attack, is still untreated, nearly a month out.



In fashioning an appropriate sentence, the Court should also recognize that Mr. Bazzi is subject to removal and will likely serve additional time, maybe three to four months, in ICE custody even were he sentenced to time-served.

At bottom, a sentence of time-served would be consistent with the Parsimony Clause. A sentence of 25 months is just one year below a Guidelines sentence and in light of the fact that he served 18 months of his sentence at the MDC, for which many courts have employed a double-time (or even more) calculus, he has arguably served the equivalent of 36 months, just one-month shy of the Guidelines. That he has served this time, as a first-offender, at 60 years of age, with significant, largely untreated health problems, should be deemed punishment enough. See 18 U.S.C. §3553(a)(2)(A). For these same reasons, time-served would provide general deterrence. Id. at (a)(2)(B). On this record, and given Mr. Bazzi's age, there is close to no chance of recidivism. An additional term of incarceration would not further protect the public. Id. at (a)(2)(C). Finally, Mr. Bazzi is not receiving proper medical care. Allowing for the speediest removal and return to Belgium will best ensure that he receives the care he fairly desperately needs. Id. at (a)(2)(D).

The Court should reject the Probation Office's recommendation of a fine of \$15,000. I am representing Mr. Bazzi pursuant to the CJA because he cannot afford counsel. Mr. Bazzi has no access to money in the United States and he has no ability to force his

Hon. Dora L. Irizarry
United States District Judge
March 4, 2025
Page 9

family to pay a fine on his behalf.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Mr. Bazzi should be sentenced to time served, one year of supervised release and a \$100 special assessment.

Respectfully submitted,


James M. Branden

Encs.

EXHIBIT A

U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Prisons
Certificate of Completion

This certificate is presented to

Mohammad Bazzi

Conflict Resolution

*Corporate Skills Training Program provided by the
Education Department at MDC Brooklyn*

A. Delgado

A. Delgado- Education Specialist

July 19, 2023

U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Prisons
Certificate of Completion

We present this Certificate to

Mohammed Bazzi

RESUME MODIFIED COURSE

Adult Continuing Education Curriculum

A. DeVastey

A. DeVastey -Education Technician

July 25th , 2023



U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Prisons
Certificate of Completion

This certificate is presented to

Mohammad Bazzi

Conflict Resolution

*Corporate Skills Education Program provided by the
Education Department at MDC Brooklyn*

A. Delgado

A. Delgado- Education Specialist
August 2, 2023



U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Prisons
Certificate of Completion

This certificate is presented to

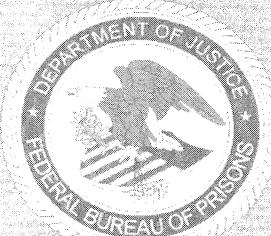
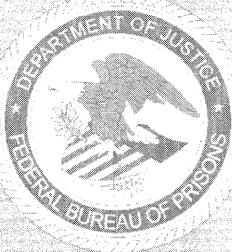
Mohammad Bazzi

The Ten Soft Skills You Need
*Corporate Skills Training Program provided by the
Education Department at MDC Brooklyn*

a. Delgado

A. Delgado- Education Specialist

July 14, 2023



**U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Prisons**

Certificate of Completion

This certificate is presented to

Mohammad Bazzi

Business Ethics

*Corporate Skills Training Program provided by the
Education Department at MDC Brooklyn*

A. Delgado

A. Delgado- Education Specialist

August 4, 2023



U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Prisons
Certificate of Completion

This certificate is presented to

Mohammad Bazzi

How to Win Friends and Influence People

*Adult Continuing Education Program provided by the
Education Department at MDC Brooklyn*

A. Delgado

A. Delgado- Education Specialist
August 23, 2023



**U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Prisons**
certificate of completion

This certificate is presented to

Mohammed Baggie

Basic Bookkeeping

*Corporate Skills Training Program provided by the
Education Department at MDC Brooklyn*

A. Delgado

A. Delgado- Education Specialist
August 4, 2023

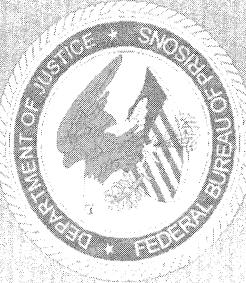


EXHIBIT B

WORK PERFORMANCE RATING - INMATE

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS

Inmate's Name: Bazzi, Mohammed	Register No: 10531-506	Unit: G-42
Evaluation Period: July 2023 - Present	Work Assignment: Food Service # 7- Religious and Special Diets	

Inmate Bazzi is a very hard-working inmate. He is very respectful, responsible, and reliable. He has been working in the kitchen for the past nine months preparing kosher, halal, and special meals for the inmate population. He is very focused, organized and takes initiative. He doesn't complain when he must do more than his detail requires and volunteers to help other details making him capable of working any detail in the kitchen. Inmate Bazzi is an all-round great worker who gets along well with both staff and inmate and has been an asset to the AM kitchen detail.

Instructions: Check the best statement in each area. Base your rating on the inmate's overall performance for the rating period--neither the inmate's best day nor worst day--as compared to what is expected of a satisfactory worker in the assignment.

A. QUALITY OF WORK

1. Unsatisfactory. Makes more errors than should for this level of training. Work must be redone.
2. Fair. Careless; makes mistakes and does not check work. Should do better work.
3. Satisfactory. Makes some mistakes but no more than expected at this level.
4. Good. Makes fewer mistakes than most inmates at this level of training. Does Journeyman level work.
5. Outstanding. Does superior work.

B. QUANTITY OF WORK

1. Unsatisfactory. Lazy, wastes time, goofs off.
2. Fair. Does just enough to get by. Has to be prodded occasionally.
3. Satisfactory. Works steadily but does not push self.
4. Good. Willing Worker. Does a full day's work and wastes little time.
5. Outstanding. Drives self exceptionally hard all the time.

C. INITIATIVE

1. Unsatisfactory. Always waits to be told what to do. Needs help getting started.
2. Fair. Usually relies on others to say what needs to be done.
3. Satisfactory. Can adapt to changes in routine. Will start work without waiting to be told.
4. Good. Can plan own work well. Acts on own in most things. Doesn't wait to be told what to do.
5. Outstanding. Has good ideas on better ways of doing things.

D. INTEREST; EAGERNESS TO LEARN

1. Poor. Shows no interest in job. Regards job as a drag or waste of time.
2. Fair. Shows minimal interest but not very eager to learn.
3. Satisfactory. Shows average amount of interest. Wants to learn own job but does not put forth extra effort.
4. Good. Above-average interest in job. Asks questions about own work and related work. May do extra work to improve skills.
5. Outstanding. Eager to master job. Wants to know everything there is to know about it. May read up on own time or volunteer to do things that will improve knowledge.

E. ABILITY TO LEARN

1. Poor. Has very low aptitude and is very slow to learn. Even when given extra instruction unable to learn, No matter how hard trying.
2. Fair. Slow but if tries eventually will pick up the skills. Needs more instructions than most.
3. Average. No slower and no faster to learn than most inmates. Requires average amount of instruction.
4. Good. Learns rapidly. Good memory. Rarely makes the same mistake twice.
5. Outstanding. Very quick to learn. Excellent memory. Is learning much more rapidly than most inmates never makes the same mistake twice.

F. NEED FOR SUPERVISION; DEPENDABILITY; SAFETY; CARE OF EQUIPMENT

- 1. Needs constant supervision. If left unsupervised will foul up, get in trouble, or wander off. Undependable.
- 2. Needs closer supervision than most. Not very dependable.
- 3. Average. Can be relied on for certain things but must be supervised by others. Usually prompt and dependable.
- X 4. Needs little supervision. Good record of dependability and promptness.
- 5. No supervision required. Completely dependable in all things.

G. RESPONSE TO SUPERVISION AND INSTRUCTION

- 1. Poor. Resentful and hostile. May argue with supervisor.
- 2. Fair. Resists or ignores suggestions.
- 3. Satisfactory. Generally, does what is told without any fuss.
- X 4. Good. No hostility or resentment. Tries to improve.
- 5. Outstanding. Makes a real effort to please the instructor. Does exactly as is told.

H. ABILITY TO WORK WITH OTHERS

- 1. Poor. Negativistic, hostile, annoying to others.
- 2. Fair. Doesn't make friends easily. Has some interpersonal difficulties.
- 3. Satisfactory. Gets along OK with most co-workers and is accepted by them.
- X 4. Good. Friendly, congenial, helpful; others like to work with.
- 5. Outstanding. Gets along well with everyone. Very popular.

I. OVERALL JOB PROFICIENCY

Based on this inmate's overall performance during this work period, if this inmate was an employee of yours in the community would you:

- 1. Fire or lay off that individual?
- 2. Transfer the person to a less demanding job at a lower pay scale?
- 3. Continue to employ the person but without a raise or promotion this time?
- X 4. Raise the person's pay but keep the person at the same job?
- 5. Promote the person to a more demanding job at a higher pay rate?

J. GRADES AND PAYX

1. Performance Pay - Grade Class (Check one) 1 2 3 X 4 M.

2. Hours of Satisfactory work

3. Regular Pay

4. Bonus Recommended: X yes no

5. Total Pay

Supervisor's Signature S. NYANOR	Date 3/19/2024
Inmate's Signature X	Date 3/19/2024

Inmate was requested to sign this rating, but refused, citing the following reason:

Staff Witness' Signature	Date
--------------------------	------

EXHIBIT C

To whom this concerns,

It is my wish to write this court to provide my personal account of Mohamed Bazzi, my father, in the hopes that some of what I say will offer a new and more holistic perspective of the man, his virtues and his flaws.

No journalist has ever told the story of how in 1997 my father sacrificed his thriving business and livelihood in Sierra Leone when he defied government orders to turn back a scheduled shipment of wheat and flour. Following the overwhelming attack by rebel groups, then government's prerogative was to starve the entire city of Freetown, rebels and civilians alike, to gain back control during the civil war. My father's defiance of this order staved off a famine for hundreds of thousands of innocents, but also led to his exile from that country and the seizure of all his assets therein.

Nor would a journalist ever pen the story of how he single handedly arranged evacuation flights on his dime for hundreds of women, children and elderly expats to leave the country during that brutal episode when no one else would or could. Just as well, no editor would ever ok a piece about the when he personally funded a poor Lebanese family's trip to Belgium to cure their 8 year old daughter's retinoblastoma. Or the multiple schools, clinics, community centres and places of worship he built at the height of his financial success. These aren't the kind of stories that sell newspaper subscriptions, when compared to scoops about narco-terrorist financial networks or the like.

If any of these stories sound novel to the court, its because my father practices an immutable humility in his day to day life, to a fault. That this humility should consequentially aid his incarceration is a cruel irony indeed.

Whilst I do not pretend to share in my father's humility or faith, I do try to share in his kindness. The sort of kindness compels you to share every meal when you have one, even with your enemies. The sort of kindness that compels one to do as much good in this life as they can. To build power stations, clean water facilities, roads and flour mills, where others built Casinos and Tourist Hotels. The sort of kindness which yields crippling unease and odium at the thought of directly or indirectly causing harm to another human being.

The sort of kindness that compels one to take over a family business because they believe the net good it can do outweighs the vitriol it is accused of. Following my father's sanctioning in 2018, I voluntarily chose to take over his energy construction firm, a decision I knew was laden with risk but one I believed to be noble and practical at the time. In hindsight, my father could certainly have done more to dissuade me of it, but many years later I still believe that out of a hundred possible universes, I would have made the same choice at-least 99 times. The exception lies in the one universe where I realised sooner my father's imperfections- and my own selfish desire to save the day was kept in check. In this reality, it is very likely that I would have never agreed to take the reigns as I did, and instead continued to live my life doing what I truly loved, which as it happens, is what I am doing now in Belgium.

In the past 2 years I have found purpose, independence and gainful employment in the food and hospitality sector. I have worked in multiple kitchens where my creative outlet for culinary storytelling has flourished. Through this medium I hope to gain the ability to connect with people through taste, memory and vision. I have long since shed the desire for respect or renown through the kind of projects and works my father built his life around. As his son, I hope and believe that his time in the US will have extended him a similar wisdom. When I heard of his experience in the kitchens of his former facility in New York, I knew this would not be far from the truth.

I appeal to this court, to see my father as I do: a man hounded by an inalienable sense of duty, imperfect in his choices, but ultimately a force of good in the world. He has been through enough, as have I. If nothing else, I ask that this court grant me and the rest of his children the chance to share a home-cooked meal together: a labor of love contrived of unimaginable adversity, nourished by triumph over it, and seasoned with insight, tenderness and healing.

Sincerely,

Wael Bazzi



James M. Branden <jamesmbranden@gmail.com>

Letter for Dad

1 message

Noor Bazzi <noorbazzi58@gmail.com>
 To: "jamesmbranden@gmail.com" <jamesmbranden@gmail.com>

Tue, Nov 26, 2024 at 2:41 PM

Dear Judge,

I wish I was able to fly to America right now so I could express how I feel in person instead of text. I also wish I was able to fly to America to see my father and just hug him, smell him and never let go. I remember the last time I saw him was in February 2023, right after his father had passed away. I had been living in Belgium at that time and flew to Lebanon for the funeral. One of my biggest wishes to this day is that I wish I hugged him so much tighter and longer if I knew that I wasn't going to see him again. When I was asked to write you a letter about my dad, I knew I could write this with my eyes closed because I talk about him everyday, if it's not with my loved ones it's between me and God, and I even feel like me and my dad can communicate through our souls because of how close we are and how much we love each other. My dad was raised with loving yet strict parents, he grew up and lost his siblings, had to take over his family business as a young boy, never liked relying on anyone but himself because he was and still is the man of the family, of all families. If you ask any stranger about him, all they would say is how much of a good man he is, how generous, thoughtful, caring, loving, positive man, husband, brother, son, father & person he is. I could be sitting in a restaurant and the chef would come up to me crying and telling me he is praying for my dad everyday and that my dad helped him and his family build a roof over their heads. Another time a valet driver for a restaurant asked me about him saying he thinks of him every single day and that my dad loved to help him whenever he had the chance whether it was money or any favor. Even the workers that are considered as the people that change your "shisha" at restaurants pray for him. And they all recognize me as his daughter because of how much I look like him. Everyday I look at myself in the mirror, all I can see is him. I will never forget the day he got sanctioned in 2017, he was on the news, the doorbell rang and a poor family came to ask him for money because their son had surgery and they knew my dad would help them out. He is so caring he did not even tell them he was going through a crisis, he put a smile on his face and prayed for their son to get better and gave them money to cover the surgery. He never complains. I think that's the most trait he has that I look up to. I remember asking him "How do you believe them? Do you know for a fact that their child is sick?" He responded "No, but I choose to believe them because I want to believe the best in everyone, but even if it's not true, at least God knows what intention is in my heart, wanting to help whoever is in need" Even when I speak to him in prison, he tries to be optimistic. As much as I can see the pain, the suffering, the misery in his eyes he will never burden even a fly with his problems. I always used to ask him, "How are you always so optimistic and hopeful and positive in this life? You never nag. You never have any negative thing to say" and what is his response every single time? "Because I trust God has good things planned for me and that everything is written. Whatever bad thing happens to you, he is just trying to teach you something" and ever since then, I have never skipped a prayer and I have managed to go forward in life with any obstacle I face with that mindset. My dad being in prison is one of the worst things that has happened to me and my family, I feel like my life has had no meaning ever since, the world has been on pause. It's the same question we all ask ourselves everyday when we first wake up and before falling asleep, when are we going to see him again? Will we ever see him again? When am I going to stop spraying his perfume on his clothes just to fall asleep? I remember when he first went into prison, there was a protest in Lebanon in front of the Romanian embassy in his honor. That's how loved he is. I don't think there's ever been a protest for anyone in our country other than the government and politicians. You might think to yourself I am just saying this because I am his daughter, but I promise you I am not. And that's why I wish I could be in front of you, so you can see that my tears are real, full of emotions, full of desperation and that the words are coming straight from the heart. He told me a sentence that I think of everyday which is "I talk to you everyday from prison, even when I am unable to call or message you. Everyday when I look outside and see the sun, I ask it to watch over you and how your day was". A man as loving, caring, genuine, soft, tender does not deserve to be suffering behind bars, he deserves a second chance to be back home with us, his family. I am begging you, I beg you to please find it in your heart to give my dad a chance. Please end our misery, and give us all a chance back at life again. We live in such a cruel world given the certain circumstances happening and I just want to feel safe in between my father's arms again. I want to remember what that feels like because I am currently so numb yet so hurt without him. I want it to stop hurting every single time I see a father with their kids having lunch or watching a Netflix documentary about an old man in prison or every Sunday since that was our day together. I pray that justice is served and that by reading this you are able to see him for his true colors which is the most loving father and man on this planet.

Baba if you are reading this too, you are my world and my everything and I love you and miss you every second of the day.

Yours truly,

Noor

I am writing this letter with a heart heavy with concern for my father, Mohammad Bazzi, who stands before you awaiting sentencing. While I understand the gravity of his situation and the need for justice, I humbly ask that you consider the man my father truly is beyond the confines of your courtroom: a loving father, and the very foundation of our family.

My father has always been the cornerstone of our lives. He is a man of unwavering loyalty and dedication, who tirelessly worked to ensure that his children had every opportunity for success. Despite the demands of his career and the challenges he faced, he always found time to be present in our lives.

Family is at the heart of everything my father does. He has always been deeply committed to our traditions, from holiday celebrations to simple Sunday lunches, to visiting his own parents every weekend. These moments are a testament to his commitment to nurturing our family unit.

One of my father's most remarkable qualities is his kindness and generosity, not only within our family but also toward others. He is the type of man who stops to help someone in need. His acts of kindness, though quiet and modest, have left a lasting impact on everyone he meets.

Since my father has been away, our family has felt an immeasurable void. He has always been the head of our household—the one we turned to for guidance, strength, and unity. Without him, we have struggled to maintain the harmony and stability he worked so hard to foster. His dream, above all else, is to watch his children walk down the aisle and become a grandfather someday—a role he would embrace with the same love and devotion that define him as a father.

Your Honor, I know my father is appearing before you as a defendant, but I hope you will see in him the caring and selfless man who has touched so many lives. The sentence you decide will not only affect him but also the family and community that depend on him. I respectfully ask that you exercise mercy in your judgment, recognizing the profound impact his absence has already had on those who love him.

Thank you for taking the time to read my words and for considering the person my father is outside of this situation. I trust in your wisdom and compassion as you deliberate on his future.

Sincerely,
Rim Bazzi

Hussein Bazzi
Freetown, Sierra Leone
2/12/2024

The Honorable [Judge's Full Name]

[Name of the Court]

[Address of the Court]

[City, State, ZIP Code]

Dear Judge [Judge's Last Name],

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to you with the deepest respect and the utmost urgency regarding my brother, Mohammed Ibrahim Bazzi, who is currently incarcerated. I ask for your compassion and understanding in reviewing his case, as our family and our business have been severely impacted by his absence.

Since my brother's departure, the burden of running our family business has fallen on my shoulders alone. We started this family business with my late Father and brothers. We've been a small, tight-knit operation for over 40 years, growing from simply a small retail store to importing and exporting and opening up a couple of local factories and my brother played an integral role in our day-to-day operations. His responsibilities ranged from overseeing production, managing client relationships, and handling the technical side of the business after our brother Nabil passed away. Without him, we have struggled to meet the demands of our clients, and the decline in business has been noticeable. Revenue has plummeted, we've lost key contracts, and several employees have been forced to leave due to financial instability.

As a result, we are now at risk of losing everything we've worked so hard to build. Our business was never intended to be a one-person operation, but with my brother's absence, I have had to juggle responsibilities that are simply beyond my capacity. The stress and strain of trying to keep everything afloat has taken a significant toll on me and our employees, who depend on us for their livelihoods.

I fully recognize that my brother's actions have consequences, and I am not asking for leniency in disregard of the law. However, I respectfully ask for your consideration in granting him an opportunity for release, so that he may return to our family, help us recover our business, and contribute positively to society. We have a strong support system in place, and I am confident that, with the proper guidance and supervision, he can reintegrate successfully.

Please know that this request comes from a place of genuine concern not only for my brother's future but for the future of our family and the employees who depend on us. I ask for your compassion in granting him the chance to prove that he can make a meaningful, positive difference, both in our family's life and in his own personal rehabilitation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I trust that you will weigh the facts before you with care, and I hope that, in your judgment, you may see the potential for a positive and productive future should my brother be given the opportunity to return home.

Sincerely,
Hussein Bazzi
Mohammed Bazzi's Brother.



James M. Branden <jamesmbranden@gmail.com>

Mohammed Bazzi Character Statement

1 message

dralibazzi@bigpond.com <dralibazzi@bigpond.com>

Fri, Dec 20, 2024 at 10:38 PM

Reply-To: dralibazzi@bigpond.com

To: jamesmbranden@gmail.com

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Dr. Ali Bazzi, and I am the elder brother of Mohammed Bazzi. I have been a practicing dentist for forty years and reside in Australia.

I am writing this letter to provide an honest and sincere character assessment of my brother Mohammed, whom I have known his entire life. In many ways, I regard Mohammad more as a son than a brother, as I have played a significant role in his upbringing and instilled many of the values he holds dear.

From an early age, Mohammed demonstrated a strong sense of responsibility and a desire for self-improvement. I vividly recall a pivotal moment when our late father decided to withdraw Mohammed from school to send him to Sierra Leone to help manage the family business. Mohammed came to me in tears, pleading for my support in convincing our father to allow him to continue his education. Although I tried to advocate for him, our father insisted on his relocation. Despite this challenging beginning, Mohammad embraced his circumstances, working tirelessly for our family's business and ultimately becoming a successful entrepreneur in Sierra Leone and The Gambia.

Throughout his life, Mohammed has consistently prioritized his family and community over personal gain. He has avoided political entanglements, focusing instead on running his business and uplifting others. In particular, Mohammed has been deeply committed to supporting those in need. His contributions to providing access to tertiary education and medical assistance for underprivileged individuals stem from his own unfulfilled desire to complete his schooling. His philanthropic efforts have extended to numerous charitable organizations over the years, reflecting his selfless and compassionate nature.

While his generosity has earned him admiration, it has also drawn attention to his success, leading to personal challenges. Despite these difficulties, I firmly believe in Mohammed's integrity and his commitment to helping others.

In my opinion, Mohammed is an innocent man. I trust that justice will prevail in his case and that he will soon be reunited with his family and community.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this statement.

Sincerely,
Dr. Ali Bazzi

Mariam Bazzi
55 Abercorn St, Bexley
NSW 2207 Australia
21 December 2024

Dear honorable Judge,
I hope my letter finds you well.
My name is Mariam Bazzi, Mohamad Bazzi's sister.
I am writing to you with a heavy heart regarding my brother and backbone, Mohamad, who is currently detained and has been convicted of crimes I believe he would never commit.

Mohamad's absence has deeply affected not only his life but our entire family, as he has always been the number one supporter and provider for many members of not only our family but our entire community.
He is a respectful, honest and honorable man who never got involved into or attributed to any political party. His first and foremost worry was always to help the poor and needy and help educate young people who couldn't afford higher education and ambitious young men who didn't have the finances to achieve their dreams, and the list of his kindness and good deeds goes on and on.

As you may already know, Mohamad was arrested shortly after the passing of our father, and shortly after that I lost my beloved husband, who was also our cousin and whom Mohamad loved very much and considered as a brother. Not long after that we also lost our dear mother. As you would imagine, all those losses in a single year were devastating for the whole family, and it pains me to think of how much grief he has endured as he had to go through all this alone while being arrested and deprived of any kind of emotional support. As for me, his absence during such a critical time in my life has left a void that can never be filled, and I believe it's crucial for him or any human being to be surrounded by family and friends, after such a profound loss.

While I understand the complexities of the legal system, I fully trust in its commitment to fairness, and I call upon your compassion as a human being and urge you to reconsider the details of my brother's case as I believe that justice has not been served. Therefore, I kindly ask for your support in ruling in his favor and not deprive his family from his love and support any longer as he is very dearly missed and needed.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I appreciate your consideration of this matter and hope for a just resolution for my brother and our family.

Sincerely,
Mariam Bazzi

January 2, 2025

Honorable Judge,

My name is Danny Bazzi, and I am writing to you as the cousin of Mohammad Ibrahim Bazzi. I respectfully ask for your understanding and leniency in your sentencing decision, as I would like to share a perspective of Mohammad that I believe captures his true character and essence. Mohammad has always been a person of remarkable generosity, selflessness, and compassion—a man whose life has been dedicated to serving others and supporting his family, community, and those in need.

Growing up, I heard countless stories about Mohammad's kindness and unwavering commitment to his community in Lebanon. He became known in our village for helping those in need, particularly orphans and underprivileged families. During the holy month of Ramadan, he would organize daily dinners to ensure no family went hungry, particularly those who could not afford food. His generosity extended beyond his community; Mohammad provided financial support to help people pursue their education and assisted others in finding work. Many families were able to build a future because of the opportunities he created, such as sending people to Africa to work in his company. These acts of kindness are a testament to his core values and the person he truly is.

Mohammad also showed remarkable dedication to his family from a very young age. After the passing of his older brother, Nabil Bazzi, he assumed responsibility for their family and the business in Africa. Despite his youth, he worked tirelessly to care for his siblings and provide for his elderly parents. He ensured they received the best care possible, refusing to place them in nursing homes and hiring special nurses to care for them. His devotion to his parents was unwavering, and his efforts were a reflection of his deep respect and love for them. Additionally, he supported his two sisters with monthly financial assistance, ensuring their needs were always met.

The entire community in Lebanon recognizes Mohammad's generosity and contributions. His selflessness, compassion, and leadership paint a clear picture of his character—a man who prioritizes the well-being of others above his own. I ask that you consider these qualities when making your decision. Mohammad's actions throughout his life demonstrate a commitment to bettering the lives of those around him, and I hope this letter provides insight into the kind of person he truly is. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Danny Bazzi



Shadyah Bazzi
7320 Bingham st
Dearborn, MI 48126
Phone # (313) 392-3993

To whom it may concern,

I, Shadyah Bazzi, The niece of Mohammad Bazzi, honored to write about my uncle, who is someone I look up to, Inspired by, and proud to call my uncle.

My uncle had to leave his home country, Lebanon, at a young age right after high school to Africa, Sierra Leone to join his dad and siblings. At the time there was good trading opportunities to take in Africa. Their beginning was very humble and hard where they had to endure hard living while sleeping on the floor and very little to eat, but they worked and succeeded. After the tragic loss of his older brother, he took over managing the family's business. He was very responsible, successful, and very ambitious. His dream of expanding the business to other countries came true. His biggest achievements were made in Gambia,

where he was able to build a petroleum port, bring electricity to over 140 villages, solved energy problems in the city by building 2 power citations, built water projects and flour mills. He did so much to improve the lives of the natives. He believed in education and created programs to ensure free education for girls. He ~~saw~~ brought so much joy to many lives and that made him proud of his accomplishments.

My uncle is a man of faith, it was engraved in him as a muslim that "the best of people are those who are most beneficial to people." He gave back to his community back home in a lot of ways; he helped to build a school for special eds., he provided scholarships for students who couldn't afford tuition, he opened a clinic for people who couldn't afford paying for medical needs. He helped in all kinds of projects around his town.

My Uncle is truly the rock of the family. He provided lots of my cousins with job opportunities including my sister and helped many members of the family with their hardships.

He is a family man. He made sure he visited his parents every Sunday, as long as he was in Lebanon. Nothing else mattered to him more than being there on Sunday. The family gatherings was something to look forward to at my grandparents house with the whole family. He is very missed. My mom (his sister) has lost a father figure with his absence the past 2 years. His absence is very missed especially by his children - two of them are still kids at the age of 9 and 7. They need him especially now through the tough time in Lebanon.

My uncle's aim in life was to provide a good life for himself and his family which he achieved through his hardwork and dedication. His good deeds will never be forgotten by so many. He may have made bad decisions in his life which he payed ^{the price} for, but I know that he always has good intentions in mind and at heart. We Pray to see him out of jail soon and back where he belongs with his loved ones

Sincerely, Shadyah Bazzi
shadyah bazzi